Saraswati curses Ganga and Lakshmi

Narayana sits with his three consorts Lakshmi, Saraswati and Ganga in Vaikuntha. All is well. One day, Ganga is overwhelmed with love for Narayana. Saraswati sees Vishnu reciprocating her overt gestures. Lakshmi too notices it. But Lakshmi is beyond envy or possessiveness. So she just smiles at them.

Saraswati tries to control her jealousy. But fails. She loses her temper. Lakshmi tries to pacify her. But Saraswati ignores her and shoots barbed words at Vishnu. She says, “I know you favour your other two wives over me. I cannot bear to see you fawning over them like this. I too yearn for your loving touch but you, as usual, ignore me. You are the greatest lord of all. You practise Dharma but you are unfair to your own consorts.”

Vishnu listens to her tirade and vanishes from Vaikuntha. Saraswati is furious. She shrieks loudly, seizes Ganga by her hair, and drags her around. Lakshmi intervenes and tries to stop her. Saraswati directs all her anger at Lakshmi now and says, “You Lakshmi? You are no better. You sat mutely like a stone…..a plant and a river and looked on sweetly when Ganga tried to gain Vishnu's attention. I curse you, Lakshmi. You will turn into a river and a plant one day because you remained quiet through it all.” Lakshmi’s eyes fill with tears but she does not utter a word.

Ganga’s fears turn to rage when she sees Saraswati cursing Lakshmi. She looks at Lakshmi and says, “Saraswati thinks she is very powerful, Lakshmi. Let’s have nothing more to do with her.” Ganga then looks at Saraswati and says, “You cursed Padma to become a river and a plant. You wretch. I curse you too. You will become a river yourself. The worst sinners on earth will bathe in your waters. You will bear all their sins and atone for them in slow anguish.”

Now it was Saraswati’s turn to scream at Ganga. She says, “You too will flow into the mortal world as a river. And the greatest of sinners will bathe in your waters and you too will have to bear the weight of their sins.”

Vishnu reappears in Vaikuntha at this juncture. He gathers Saraswati in his arms and says, “Lakshmi, you will be born in amsa as Tulasi. You will marry Shankhachuda. And after living through that life you will return by my side in Vaikuntha.”

“As Tulasi, you will be revered as the most sacred plant and you will purify the three lokas with your fragrance. You will also flow as a river called the Padma. It will be one of the most auspicious rivers in the world.”

Vishnu then looks at Ganga and says, “You will cleanse the sins of all the people who bathe in your waters. Bhagiratha of Sagara’s line will bring you down as a river and you will be known as Bhagirathi. You will marry a king called Shantanu. And Shiva will wear you in his jata.” Vishnu then looks at Saraswati and says, “And you, my dear Saraswati, have to go to Brahmaloka and become Brahma’s consort.”

Lakshmi says, “Lord, forgiveness is a virtue that we all must practise. If you do not forgive my sisters, who else will?” Vishnu says, “A curse is a curse and has to be lived through, Lakshmi. But what you say is true too. I can only limit your curses to a certain extent. Let Saraswati be born in amsa as a river on earth. But she must take half her Shakti and become Brahma’s wife as well. But the other half of her Shakti can remain here with me.

Ganga too must be born in two amsas. She has to live through her life on earth as a river. She will dwell in lord Shankara’s jata and with me here in Vaikuntha at the same time. As for you, Lakshmi, after the Kali Yuga the earth will no longer be sacred enough to contain you. That is when you will return entirely to me. You were totally innocent in today’s squabble and even initiated this reconciliation. So you will always experience the joy of union and true happiness with me.”

In The Larger Scheme Of Things

“And before the three of you start cursing your fate or burden yourselves with guilt – know that all this was bound to happen – and for a good

reason too. The Kali Yuga has dawned on earth. Mortals will sin. You are their only rays of hope. They can expiate their sins by bathing in your waters. Only then can their spirits soar to freedom. All the sacred teerthas will return to Vaikuntha when you come back to me. Only Kashi and Vrindavan will exist in the world. And all this was preordained by Krishna himself."

Saraswati is filled with remorse nevertheless. But Vishnu looks at her with love and reminds her of her beautiful past…

Krishna, Radha and Saraswati

Vishnu says, "Saraswati, it was Krishna who introduced your worship to the world. You were born from Radha's lips. And, like all other gopis, you too fell in love with Krishna instantly. Krishna sensed this and said, "Saraswati, Radha is already with me. I will reciprocate the love that you have for me in my own way. But I have created you for a specific purpose.

You, O Devi Saraswati, will hold a veena and sacred books in your hands. You will be known as Vagdevi, the mother of speech. You will dispel the darkness in the hearts of sinners. You will be worshipped on Vasant Panchami. And children will be initiated into the path of knowledge and learning only after they offer their prayers to you."

"Vishnu, the blue god with four arms is born from me. Ten million Kamas dwell in his body. So please go to Vaikuntha. You will find eternal bliss with Narayana. Lakshmi too dwells there. But she is beyond jealousy and possessiveness. And Hari will treat you both equally." Remember Saraswati? You followed Krishna's advice and came here to Vaikuntha to live with me." Vishnu then continues…

Saraswati's mula mantra and kavacha

"It was Krishna who revealed the Saraswati kavacha to Brahma in Vrindavana, in the Raasa Mandala. And I, Narayana passed on the Saraswati mula mantra to Valmiki who in turn passed it on to mankind.

Chanting your mantra – the Saraswati Devi mula mantra - empowers human beings with Siddhis. And your kavacha, the Saraswati kavacha embodies the essence of the most sacred mantras. Brihaspati, the guru of the devas and Sukra, the acharya of the Daityas and Danavas became wiser than the others merely by touching your kavacha."

Thus, Vishnu pacifies Saraswati and reaffirms his faith and love in her. He makes her understand how they are playing such crucial roles in ensuring the wellbeing of mankind.

The three devis know that Vishnu's decree was their destiny. But now that Narayana had explained everything to them with such love in his heart, they did what they had to do willingly and with utmost love for Him and mankind.

Many things make complete sense to us only in the long run. We are but Nimits in His hands. Yet, we should remember, always, that outbursts of anger/jealousy can often change the course of our lives. Sometimes forever. And despite our deepest regrets, we can never turn the clock back and set things right again.